

**Department of Telecommunications and Energy
First Set of Information Requests**

**THE BERKSHIRE GAS COMPANY
D.T.E. 03-11**

Date Filed: April 16, 2003

Question

DTE 1-1: Please refer to the Company's Filing at F1. Explain why the Company has less than 3 years of data for Telephone Answering Factors for calls handled within 40 seconds and for calls handled within 45 seconds.

Response: The Company has been collecting data with respect to telephone response time for emergency and non-emergency calls since August 2000. Telephone response standards evolved based upon regulatory developments and internal capabilities. In recognition of these developments, the Company added an automated attendant system and provided separate tracking for emergency and non-emergency calls, which prior to August 2000 were not tracked. Calls are now routed through the automated attendant into a separate call distribution group where the percentage of emergency calls answered within 40 seconds is recorded. Service and billing calls are routed into a separate call distribution group where the percentage of calls answered in less than 45 seconds is recorded. The Company was not able to readily distinguish between emergency and non-utility service calls even with the automated attendant system until 2001. Thus, while the Company has data on telephone response time since August 2000, the data is not meaningful or appropriate for a regulated service quality standard. Since the Department's establishment of the final Guidelines, the Company has evaluated and installed the necessary equipment and systems to be able to satisfy the Department's standards with respect to telephone response time. Based on the availability of data that meets the Department's criteria for this measure, the Company will have the minimum historical data to develop a benchmark upon receiving data through 2003 and will be benchmarked against this standard beginning 2004. In addition, the Company is now tracking telephone response time for the 20 second standard.

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DTE 1-2: Please refer to the Company's filing at I-1. Provide evidence to support Berkshire's claim that the "Company was not able to collect [Service Appointments Met] data accurately until early 2002 with the resolution of certain software concerns." In your response, please provide all correspondence between Company staff and Company management (e.g., memos, letters, e-mail, etc.) that show that Berkshire had problems collecting these data, including a detailed description of the "software concerns" that affected the collection of the data. Also provide the raw data (e.g., log book entries, etc.) that show that Berkshire achieved 100 percent performance with respect to Service Appointments met in 2002.

Response: Please see the Company's response to AG 1-3 in the Attorney General's First Set of Information Requests in DTE 03-11 for the raw data that shows Berkshire achieved 100 percent performance with respect to Service Appointments met in 2002.

Regarding the Company's software concerns, Berkshire has been collecting data on service appointments met on the same date for service calls that require the presence of a customer since July 2000. The data collected until recently had been generated manually based upon data collected within the Company's CIS computer information system and service records from the Company's technicians. The manual process compared all scheduled jobs performed by the Company's service personnel (based upon the initially scheduled date) to information with respect to the actual date the service was performed. The collection and refinement of such data and the comparative process required substantial effort. Moreover, the manual data collected by the Company had not always included detailed data in the particular format to provide a meaningful performance standard. For example, the Company's data would not reflect instances when, based upon the request of the customer or the Company, a particular job was rescheduled. The report might show this as a missed appointment. The Company has sought to refine its efforts in terms of collecting the necessary data and necessary software programming and training. The Company was able to procure and install all necessary measures in order to compile appropriate and accurate data with respect to this measure by January 2002. However, since January 2002 was the first month the system was in place, there were some initial system technical issues that had to be corrected to provide more accurate data. Nonetheless, the Company feels comfortable that the data collected for January 2002 and February 2002 resulted in no service appointments missed based on the response to the AG's First Set of Information

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**Question
DTE 1-2 (Cont'd.):**

Requests in DTE-03-11, AG-1-3. The Company expects to have data for three years by December 2004 in order to incorporate a company-specific standard for this feature by 2005.

A number of internal meetings were held to address this concern and in connection with the procurement, installation and testing of the relevant software. Correspondence relating to the retention of a software consultant and employee training with respect to such new system are provided in Attachment DTE 1-2. The materials with respect to training describe the comprehensive procedures implemented to track service appointments and the sophisticated software obtained for such purpose.

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DTE 1-3: Please refer to the Company's Filing at I-1. Explain why Berkshire has only two years of data on On-Cycle Monthly Meter Reads.

Response: The Company's 2002 Service Quality Report at page I-1 contains a column entitled "Years in Database". As described in the note for such volume, this table reflects historical data, i.e., through 2001. The 2002 Report provided data for calendar year 2002. Thus, the Company now maintains three years of data for this measure as noted in the entry for "Comments". This achievement is consistent with representations made in prior service quality filings by the Company.

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Question

DTE 1-4: Please refer to the Company's Filing at F1. For the following measures, explain why Berkshire calculated its benchmarks using interval estimates instead of point estimates:

- (A) On-Cycle Monthly Meter Reads;
- (B) Consumer Division Cases;
- (C) Billing Adjustments;
- (D) Lost Time Accident Rate;
- (E) Unaccounted for Gas

Response: The Company notes that the Department's service quality Guidelines require that the Company's performance with respect to these measures be compiled and reported on a monthly interval basis. Benchmarks were then summarized by the Company on an annual basis in a manner that was similarly consistent with the Guidelines.

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Question

DTE 1-5: Please refer to the Company's filing at III-1. Explain why Berkshire answered only 58.68 percent of the total telephone calls, and 57.38 percent of non-emergency telephone calls, within 20 seconds, in September 2002.

Response: During the month of September 2002, there were 2 full time call center employees unavailable to work due to absences for illness or workmen's compensation. September also usually results in a higher than average number of calls and higher than average call time due to budget billing recalculations. The unavailability of these 2 employees as well as a previously scheduled employee absence resulted in the lower response time.

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DTE 1-6: Please detail the internal audits for each SQ penalty measure and reporting requirement that have been conducted to assure the accuracy of Company data. If internal audits have not been performed, please describe the Company's plan to perform such audits.

Response: The Company has recently established a formal internal audit procedure to put in place for each SQ penalty measure and reporting requirement. This process has been established and refined to address final Department service quality standards. On a quarterly basis, the Manager of Internal Audit and Taxes will be reviewing all of the raw data for each measure to insure the accuracy of the Company data. A summary report describing each measure and its accuracy will be provided after each quarterly review. Further, the Manager of Internal Audit and Taxes will review the annual filing to insure the data provided coincides with the data reviewed during the current year.

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DTE 1-7: Please explain how each of the following SQ measures was recorded and measured:

- (A) Telephone Answering Factor;
- (B) Emergency Answering;
- (C) Service Appointments Kept;
- (D) Meter Reads;
- (E) Bill Adjustments;
- (F) Lost Time Accident Rate;
- (G) Response to Odor Calls;
- (H) Restricted Work Day Rate;
- (I) Unaccounted for Gas; and,
- (J) Restricted Work Day Rate

In your response, indicate if the Company faced any recording and measurement issues and how they were resolved. Provide documentation to support your answer.

Response: Please see the Company's responses to the Attorney General's First Set of Information Requests in DTE 03-11 as follows:

- (A) Telephone Answering Factor – AG-1-1
- (B) Emergency Answering – AG-1-1 and AG-1-2
- (C) Service Appointments Kept – AG-1-3 and AG-1-11
- (D) Meter Reads – AG-1-4
- (E) Bill Adjustments - AG-1-5 and AG-1-6
- (F) Lost Time Accident Rate – AG-1-7
- (G) Response to Odor Calls – AG-1-8
- (H) Restricted Work Day Rate – AG-1-7
- (I) Unaccounted for Gas – AG-1-12
- (J) Restricted Work Day Rate – see (H)